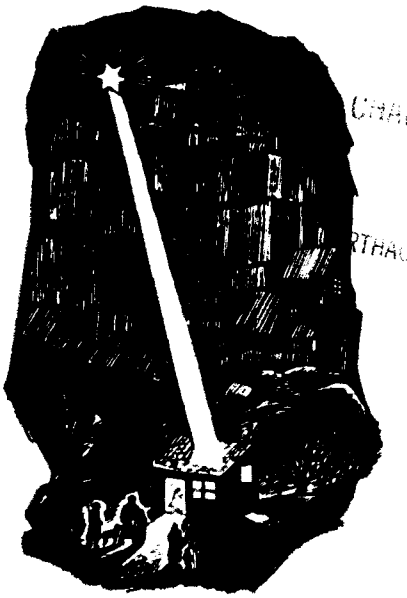
Volume XCVII No. 12 December 22, 1972 40 cents

THE GOSPEL AND LIBERATION

DOROTHEE SOLLE



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NEWS & VIEWS

The Philippines

The comment on this page [Nov. 10] concerning the Philippines' martial-law situation brought a demurrer from a reader in Pennsylvania.

"While we dislike martial law and while we hope there is an in-between rather than it or chaos, we wonder if we really should be so aghast when for other people it seems to be working," the reader wrote.

She proceeded to quote a letter from a family in Cebu with whom she has been corresponding for 15 years:

"Everything is normal under the martial law. We are living very peaceful in our city. Everybody is safe from bad elements. Our city looks very clean. Students help our local government to clean all the places to change new face. All residents cooperate in the New Society program of our beloved President Marcos. No past presidents have done it. Every family are (*sic*) in the Green Revolution launched by the First Lady to help the family's needs. Seeds of different kinds of vegetables are given for backyard gardens. . . .

"Now, all students are required to show I.D. cards with their photo when going in the school. This move is very good because our children are safe from drug pushers who used to enter the school."

But there's another side of the coin, an extremely unpretty side, and it turns up in excerpts from a letter by a professor at the University of the Philippines, which was smuggled out of the country and printed by Liberation News Service:

"Dear .....:

"I am writing this letter on a borrowed typewriter with a very bad ribbon, after 11 days of life underground. A friend who can get out of the country will mail this in T..... next Monday, for all mail coming or going to the United States is scrupulously censored ever since Marcos seized power at midnight on Sept. 21. . . .

"As you know from my past letters, we have been in a state of undeclared martial law for some time.

"But it escalated so alarmingly the last month, with undeclared curfew, bus checks complete with frisking, lightning-like surprise raids on the headquarters of organizations which the government has blacklisted as 'subversive,' mass arrests without search warrants or right of counsel until several days later, that we University 'subversives' have had packed overnight bags in readiness for weeks. . . .

"As I climbed into the car [to flee] with my one briefcase, I found W.R., speech and drama professor, and one of the country's top stage directors, in sandals and tee shirt also leaving the campus for the last time.

"There was not a newspaper on any newstand and the newsboys milled about forlornly in intersections. Later there was an announcement that anyone caught with a shortwave radio set would be shot.

"The State University is a ghost town now and they say it will be closed for one year. I am writing this because what happened to me is what has happened and has been happening for the last three years to millions of people in the Philippines in one way or another.

"What is our common crime that we are to be hunted down and put behind barbed wire?

"Mine was writing certain articles and teaching my students that it is a crime to be educated and let someone else take all the risks to achieve change. I personally led them out on picket lines, as did Pete and W., and Flora and the throngs who are in hiding somewhere tonight, never sleeping more than two successive nights in the same house, until the first dreadful weeks are over.

"There are thousands of nameless people who have been beaten up, blacklisted, hunted down, and many of them liquidated without a trace. Only last week we were informed that at least a busload of students was massacred while escaping from the cities to the provinces. . . ."

The anonymous professor wound up his long letter with a fear and a hopeful conviction:

"What I fear most at this stage is that the American people will be bamboozled into a monetary and military support of the Marcos regime; that Manila will become the next Saigon. I am equally convinced that the American people, who are never consulted on such matters, would never want this to happen.

"I know that the average American would never tolerate American complicity in Manila. . . . The American people are not the enemy of the Filipino people."

French Women's Lib

The liberated French woman is not really so liberated, according to Nesta Roberts, Paris correspondent of *The Manchester Guardian*.

Women make up slightly more than one-third of the French labor force, she remarks, but there is an average disparity between their pay and that of men of between 6 and 7 percent. "That figure can conceal differences of as much as 35 percent, for women executives and engineers in the provinces."

The French National Assembly recently moved to eliminate this injustice, on paper at least, by passing a bill favoring equal pay for women. Nesta Roberts' optimism is limited. The new bill's teeth "are less than sabres," she says.

On other fronts, Nesta Roberts notes that the Ecole Polytechnique has admitted its first girl students; that France's first woman Ambassador has settled into her post at Panama; and that a woman barrister has taken the trophy for eloquence awarded by the Union of Young Barristers. (The last, coincidentally, was Maître Colette Lacordaire, great-great-niece of the distinguished preacher of Notre Dame.)

But Ms. Roberts refuses to be carried away. "France takes her time over these things," she comments. "Her first woman doctor qualified in 1868, but it was not until 1959 that a woman, Jeanne Levy, held a chair in the Medical Faculty of Paris."

Odds and Ends

—The Thomas More Association's annual award for "the most distinguished contribution to Catholic literature" goes this year in twin form: to Andrew Greeley and Eugene Kennedy. The citation, in part: "To the institutional crisis Eugene Kennedy and Andrew Greeley have brought professional skills of the first order to bear, most notably in the massive study of the American priesthood which they directed at the request of the American hierarchy—a study which was badly needed and long overdue."

—Some news emphases made the recent ecumenical letter of 72 theologians on U.S. policies in Indochina sound pathetically anti-climactic. However the purpose of the letter was not merely to condemn the past, but to add to the growing awareness that "such trends, unless radically reversed by all governments, will lead mankind down the pathway of mounting mass murder and bring to an end all hopes for a social development toward a more just and peaceful world." A point worth hammering.

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Speak for the Unborn

Springfield, Ill.

To the Editors: Thanks to you and to Richard J. Neuhaus for his "Figures and Fetuses" [Nov. 24]. In our city also the abortion issue falls along the conservatives vs. liberals line. I'm so sick of people assuming I'm for abortion because I have liberal thoughts, and sick of others who assume I'm against abortion because I'm Catholic.

One pro-life group here, a women-to-women pregnancy counseling service which is supposed to be non-sectarian and grass-roots funded, was originated and is controlled by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Springfield and his staff. Other pro-life groups in town used Catholic parish rosters almost exclusively when they conducted their membership drives.

I am opposed to abortion because I feel all children from conception on, are entitled to the same rights as you and I.

I am a Catholic who does not regularly attend church functions. I am 26 and married, the father of two children. I wear a beard and wire-rimmed glasses. I am working on a master's degree in public affairs reporting and I have been a religion teacher. I hope that confuses conservative and liberal categorists.

We must all begin a rational discussion of this crucial issue and its effect on our national sense of morality. We must not attempt to speak, on this issue, for the poor, the black, the disadvantaged; they all have voices and can speak for themselves.

We must speak for and in the interest of the unborn child, who is at the mercy of us all.

NICHOLAS J. PENNING

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters of not more than 250 or 300 words naturally have a better chance of being published.

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COMMONWEAL A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts.
Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y.
Printed in the USA and published weekly,
except biweekly Christmas-New Year's and June to mid-September,
by Commonweal Publishing Co., 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016
MUrray Hill 3-2042. *Copyright © 1972 Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc.*
US and Canada: $14 a year. Foreign $16. Single copies 40¢

THE UNCOMPLETED FEAST

Christmas, once again, seems about to survive the world's attempts to abuse, distort, overwhelm and diminish it. Today, Christmas as a cultural holiday, the slow, fitful winding-down of the often destructive pace of a year, evokes varying emotions from our society—not all of them appropriate to the original event. It occasions greed, the compulsion to buy and sell, to create self-indulgent gimmicks simply that they might be bought and sold—whether or not they are either useful or beautiful. It applies the pressure to "give" whether or not the giving really symbolizes a relationship or dignifies the receiver. It brings on loneliness—in those who have loved well but now stare out their windows in hospitals, barracks, tenements or high-rise luxury apartments at the melting snow remembering lost lovers, husbands, wives, sons; and in those who have never loved, have seldom been moved by any emotion more profound than the passing sentimental choke for a melting snowman. It inspires compassion stirred by the sight and experience of human suffering as we reflect on the passion and compassion of Jesus, and faith warmed by the communal joy of the liturgy, by "Oh Holy Night," and the reminder in the Epistle to the Hebrews that God has spoken to us definitively in his Son.

This is the season in which we have been accustomed to expect the most—of God, ourselves, and our fellow men; and the season in which we can also become conscious of the gap between our best hopes and our failures. And this is as it should be; for the original event itself, dramatizes the same contrasts and paradoxes of human life that challenge and confuse today's men of good—and not-so-good—will. The announcement of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, the evangelists tell us, was not universally well received. It inspired the tender generosity of the shepherds, the courageous journey of the visionaries from the East and, at the same time, the insane jealousy of the murderous Herod. Jesus was then, from the moment of his birth, a man marked for a violent death. He was a threat then, as he remains today, to all those men who crave political power to the extent that neither love nor justice will be allowed to stand in their way.

Yet, the glorious element in the circumstances of Christ's birth is that

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born into a hostile world—of a poor, temporarily homeless family, in an occupied territory, on the outskirts of an inhospitable city—he is destined from the first moment of his life, by grace and by history, to triumph over his opposition. As St. John described it, the darkness of the world could not overcome him. It was the kind of triumph that the world would scorn. Yet it was a triumph nonetheless—one that good men everywhere to this day struggle all their lives, with uneven results, to share.

The Christian today is the person who finds in the life and death of Christ the best challenge to his better self, and who finds in this sacred feast—in its Word, its Eucharist and its fellowship—the best nourishment for his journey.

Today, when we consider the birth of Jesus, we cannot view it in isolation from his entire life—above all, the violence of his death. The violence that stalked Jesus from the moment of his birth still stalks the world, still striving—sometimes with considerable success—to offset the impact of the Incarnation. The Christian professes that the dignity of man is founded not merely on natural law but also on his adopted sonship of God, on his brotherhood with the God-man. And so he deals with a world like the world that both cheered and murdered Jesus. The world yearns for love yet is often too self-preoccupied to feel its touch or recognize its glance. Half is hungry for bread, yet the other half is too gluttonous to share the bread it hoards. It longs for peace yet remains so seduced by power and an idolatrous faith in weaponry; and the victims of war are denied the very humanity that Jesus came to heighten, to dignify, to divinize.

Perhaps Christmas remains, therefore, because it is the uncompleted feast. Its ideals will never be definitively achieved; yet its resources will never be exhausted. Like our own birthdays it is the day we must return to, in the company of those we love most—sometimes in the spirit of penance and inadequacy, always in the spirit of hope—to rediscover who we are and what we have been called to be.

NOTICE

In keeping with what has become common magazine practice, Commonweal *publishes no year-end issue. The next issue will be dated Jan. 5. To all our readers, our very best wishes for the Christmas season.*

THE EDITORS

LIFE UNDER THE MILITARY

REPRESSION IN BOLIVIA

The Bolivian military government of Hugo Banzer is persecuting suspected Communists and revolutionaries with a messianic zeal. Since coming to power in August, 1971, Banzer has cleaned up the remainder of the guerrilla National Liberation Army, (ELN) filled up political prisons and chased out numerous progressive priests and religious.

The government has put a halo on this war against political opponents by declaring the measures necessary for the defense of Western Christian civilization. The threat is presented as the atheistic Communism which was being allowed to infiltrate national life under the previous military regime of Juan José Torres. (Torres was an ineffectual leader who came to power with a torrent of leftist rhetoric.)

Early this year, the government began advertising its anti-guerrilla activities. Posters were put up in the streets showing the faces of the National Liberation Army leaders. The purpose was to marshal public opinion to justify the military hunting parties mercilessly chasing the remaining guerrillas. The movement had been broken under the Torres' government.

The posters helped psychologically to prepare the public for the hundreds of police raids on homes and the resulting forced confessions. The government claimed it uncovered many guerrilla arsenals and future prisons of the people. In several cases, police announced their visit by spraying the house with machine-gun bullets. This tactic resulted in the death of the wife of the late Nestor Paz, "the mystical Christian of the guerrilla movement," in her home at Cochabamba.

Police were following the rules established by Banzer when he told opponents that bullets would be replacing tear gas. Even before Banzer verbalized it, this attitude was in effect. In the early days of the coup, university students were lined up and killed in Santa Cruz, seat of the Banzer rebellion. Estimates of those killed range from 40 to 64.

On Nov. 5, 1971 the government reestablished the death penalty as a legalization of the Banzer attitude. The Christian Democratic Party, the only survivor among the parties not participating in the Banzer government, issued a valiant criticism:

"To establish a death penalty for crimes not previously specified or defined is to grant government authorities absolute power over the lives of the people. Further-

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more, according to their own experience, authorities can interpret any activity as terrorism, aggression or kidnapping. In effect, this nullifies the democratic right to not be a militant of officialism."

The Christian Democrats also criticized the existence of a death squadron whose aim "is to kill anyone suspected of Communism."

If this holy war were strictly limited against the National Liberation Army, the repression could be attributed to a simplistic anti-Communism. However, the persecution has also been aimed at unions, political leaders, cultural centers, the press and the progressive sector of the Catholic church. Many church people have come under suspicion merely for citing passages from Vatican II, *Populorum Progressio* or the Medellin documents.

Over 20 priests and religious have had to flee the country either because of threats against their lives by anti-Communist partisans or because of subtle pressures by ecclesiastics in league with the government. Convents, rectories and even a bishop's home have been raided. Most of these raids have turned up no suspicious evidence.

At least 1500 political prisoners are believed to be distributed in the different penal colonies located in the Bolivian Andes. In the one located in Viacha, over 100 women have been tortured. Many of these are wives and relatives of people forced to flee after the coup.

The Viacha situation was vividly described in a document issued by the Reflection Group of the Catholic University:

"Those detained, above all those suspected of subversion, suffer horrible tortures. Women are also submitted to these tortures, even those expecting to give birth soon. The well-known guerrilla, Loyola Guzman, suffered an abortion in the Viacha prison because of torturing. One prisoner, named Judith, a native of Sucre, gave birth prematurely to a little girl because of the maltreatment. The attention given by some doctors imprisoned allowed the baby to live. The girl was baptized and given the ironic name: Libertad Bolivia (Freedom Bolivia)."

The anti-Communist specter is also a convenience in binding together the two political parties sharing power with the military. Although the military is clearly the first among equals, it shares government ministries with the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) and the Bolivian Socialist Falange. The two parties are historic and bloody rivals. The Falange suffered a brutal repression during the 13 years the MNR controlled the government, and has not forgotten. The crass opportunism which caused both parties to support the Banzer coup forms a frail alliance. The Communist scare reinforces the alliance somewhat by giving both parties a common enemy.

Some sources claim the witch hunt is also providing money for the government. The sources say the U.S. is paying Bolivia $5 a day for the upkeep of each prisoner while the government spends only 50¢ of each $5 for this purpose. Although the rumor is strong, little evidence has been produced to support it. On the other hand, the U.S. government has not hidden the fact that it is, overall, favorable to the Banzer government. In the year since Banzer took over, the U.S. has approved $63.4 million in aid. In the year prior only $5.9 million was approved.

The Banzer government is a welcome relief for the U.S. after the two previous military governments which nationalized several foreign companies, including a subsidiary of Gulf Oil, and which tried to gain some economic independence from the U.S. by initiating trade relations with the Soviet Union and its satellites. Banzer is steering Bolivia along strictly capitalist lines with neighboring Brazil as the model. This means a country safe for U.S. investors. As in the case of Brazil, the widespread repression needed to produce this climate seems secondary to U.S. policy-makers.

The results for many Bolivians have been disastrous. Thousands of teachers and students have been deprived of their academic life. Banzer closed the universities for almost a year to keep them from becoming possible centers of opposition. This has caused a pilgrimage of over 5,000 Bolivian students to other countries in an attempt to complete their studies. Added to this are the numerous broken homes due to imprisonment, death and exile. To these people, Banzer's messianic zeal appears more like the four horsemen of the apocalypse.

ROBERTO VALDA

(Roberto Valda is a correspondent for Latinamerica Press. Since this article was written, the Bolivian government has declared a "state of siege" and stepped up repression in the country.)

COMING

JOHN P. SISK writes about the place of sports in the American culture:

"To be absorbed intensely and utterly in a world out of the world in which a satisfactory form of self-transcendence is possible: both the fanaticism and asceticism of the athlete come from this. If the athlete, the game player, is to experience the exhilaration of prize-winning he must train: punish his body, deny its appetites, delay its satisfactions, if only in the end to refine it as an achieving and experiencing instrument. He must be a martyr in will, as the church historian W. H. C. Frend tells us the early monastics aspired to be, in order not to miss the glory of the martyrs in blood."

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THE GOSPEL AND LIBERATION

DOROTHEE SOLLE

The role of political theology in relation to the liberation of mankind

THE GOSPEL is wonderful. It speaks about my life in the way in which I want my life to be talked about: without any contempt. It speaks with a seriousness that does not permit even a single day of my life to be despised; it speaks of a hope that does not permit even a single person to be omitted. It speaks of a sorrow which does not allow itself to grow blind, and of a joy that is contagious. The Gospel speaks without any contempt about the life of all human beings: every hour counts, every hunger means the right to eat, all the tears will be collected, nobody is talked out of his fear, nobody is counted out.

The Gospel is beautiful because it abolishes all cynicism, all self-contempt, and all contempt for other people. It does not allow me to accept life only partially —so long as it is young or healthy or fit; it confounds those who only love their life to a certain extent or under certain conditions. The Gospel expresses an infinite affirmation of life. It deals with a man who has lived this infinite affirmation. He was a worker who wandered about with a group of friends. They shared what they owned, they helped the sick. He told stories which dealt with liberation. Competition and fear were excluded, money and power played no role. "As you know," he said, "the rulers of the people oppress their people, and whoever holds power uses it recklessly. But this is not the way it shall be with you" (Mt.20:25f.) He came into conflict with those who held power. Clerical circles and civil authorities collaborated; he was put on trial. He was sentenced to death. But the reason for his speaking and acting remained in the memory of the people. He himself, the murdered one, remained with them; his stories passed from mouth to mouth. He could not be put to death. "Why should one still be a Christian?" many ask today. I shall attempt to render a simple answer: because we still need liberation.

The Gospel stands in the cause of freedom for all human beings; or more precisely, in view of the reality of oppression, the Gospel's business is the liberation of all human beings. Its concern rests with the oppressed, the poor, the crying. This interest, this bias, is not just an inference. The Bible demands that we participate in this concern for the liberation of all, or rather that we understand it as our very own interest. Only the liberation of all can really mean the liberation of the individual; only the happiness of all human beings deserves the unambiguous affirmation which the word "faith" involves and which transcends the present level of realization. Having faith, we put our wager on the liberation of all people. In the activity of having faith all our powers—thinking, feeling, working, anticipating —are concentrated on this liberation. We recall the liberation which has been experienced in earlier times, and we plan for the coming liberation.

Theology, as a reflection on faith, has to comprehend the social situation of those who are injured and expose the social causes of their injury. Theology has to become political theology.

Theology cannot afford to say out of hand to a man: "God loves you." Since every fact of reality is sub-

DOROTHEE SOLLE, *a well known European scholar, delivered the accompanying paper at a plenary session of the International Congress of Learned Societies in the Field of Religion, held in Los Angeles last September. It is reprinted with the permission of the Council on the Study of Religion, with executive offices in Waterloo, Ontario.*

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stantial, established by social process, such a sentence has to be actualized politically. It will only have meaning if it initiates the movement of change in the status quo. Imagine that this sentence is said to a person who has lived fifteen years in our urban slums. The hatred he has experienced renders such a sentence unbelievable for him. It gives him no reason to trust in the love of God. He has experienced that he cannot get work because he comes from a slum, that his children are sent to special schools for slow learners, though they are as talented as others. The society which did not accept him made itself his enemy through the experience of his life. Thus such a situation cannot be glossed over by a mere word. The capacity to love and to trust somebody is determined by this history and experience in which someone has participated. Therefore the socially determined situation can make it impossible for someone to decide whether he will trust or distrust. The decision has been taken away from him. He cannot start to have faith, to hope, or to love; he has to be made healthy first.

IN THE Gospel of John a story is told about the sick at the pool of Bethesda, who wait for an angel to come and move the water. Then whoever is first to enter the water will be cured. Jesus talks to one of the sick who has been waiting for years. He is not able to get down to the water, and says to Jesus: "Lord, I do not have anybody who will take me to the pool when the water is moved" (Jn.5:7). As long as he has to say this, as long as he is alone and therefore without help, he is condemned to sickness. Without other persons he does not have a chance. His sickness, whether physical or social (within the view of the New Testament these are much closer to each other than in our thought, which tends to divide the two fields)—this sickness is not his private affair which he has to manage all by himself. Rather, it becomes social and turns into a question for other people. Jesus abolishes the situation in which one has to say "I don't have anybody," the isolation which is the consequence of despair and at the same time the cause of new despair. Within the perspective of this story, to be cured means that nobody has to say any more: "I don't have anybody."

The Gospel places sickness and cure in their original context. It makes the sickness of the ill the sickness of Jesus through which he ultimately dies, and binds his own healing to the healing of the other. Therefore the language of the Gospel, being the language of liberation, must at the same time maintain a critical function. Today we need a political theology which is conceivable only on the basis of a critical analysis. Without "Law" the Gospel cannot be understood. The critical tradition of the Bible has to be taken up and realized as a critique of religion, of power structures and of society within the context of our own social situation. However, to this day there is still lacking a theology which systematically reflects upon the relationship between faith and politics.

There stems from the history of the Constantinian age the legacy of a certain distrust and insecurity, because of the fact that the Church has agreed with and joined politics: indeed the Church itself took over state-supporting and state-forming positions and accommodated itself to those in power (frequently by subverting or suppressing its own message). Therefore many Christians today plead for neutrality. From embarrassing experience they draw the conclusion that the Church should remain politically neutral and stand above partisanship. At most the individual Christian—so they think—could or should himself engage in political matters. From the very beginning a political theology is confronted with rejection. One fears that the Gospel will be dissolved into a socialistic strategy, that Christians will let themselves become "useful idiots" who tend to undercut the democratic structure of a capitalistic society. One is afraid of a new totalitarian consciousness within which politics is no longer endowed with its own rationale, but is subordinated to an ideology that claims an insight into the entirety of history—an insight which thinks only monolithically in matters of value, and therefore proceeds to the accomplishment of this singlemindedness in a totalitarian manner. However, political theology is not the same as politics based on theology. Nor does it mean a factual political program developed from Christian faith. There are no specific Christian solutions to the problems of this world for which a "political theology" would have to develop a theoretical framework. Rather, "political theology" means the interpretation of the Gospel in which "politics" is understood as the comprehensive and crucial field in which Christian truth has to be actualized.

WE UNDERSTAND the Gospel in its seriousness only when we keep in mind the political horizon of our life; that means, when we are aware of the winning and losing of our life as being dependent on social presuppositions. From the Gospel we receive the unmediated promise, as well as the demand, of peace, freedom and justice for all. Theology will assume the task—within the actual society—of presenting critique and design. The truth which is meant by Christian thought cannot tolerate abstraction—that is, neither mere theory, nor pure doctrine. The truth of Christ exists only as concrete truth. Theological concepts convey truth only to the extent that they help to realize the change of reality. "Reality" in this context is not simply to be understood in the sense of given power structures, and "to change" not only in the sense of just doing something for its own sake. The sentence "your sins are forgiven you," for instance, can over-

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come the real situation of an individual—that is, the situation as it had been determined by the past. However, it can have this power of changing reality only if the person who makes this statement participates in the change—that is, only if he himself starts to restructure the past, along with the one who bears the onus, and only if he dismisses the magical use of religious slogans. The sentence "you are called to freedom" does not become true for wage-earners simply by its being proclaimed to them; rather, it becomes truth through social realization: you are called to self-determination, to cooperation and to organizing your own work yourselves. The reality of those persons will be changed if they acquire a different awareness of themselves. The sentence "you shall be my people" becomes truth if it also concerns the users, producers and sellers of napalm, that is, if it opens the eyes of those who are co-responsible for the destruction of the life which has been promised to all men.

Political theology starts with the question of how an authentic life is possible for all men. That does not mean, however, that the question of individual life should be silenced or should be put aside as being unnecessary. Nevertheless, even this question can only be answered with respect to the social conditions and within the context of social hopes. No one can save himself alone. The individual does not believe and understand things just for himself; rather, he believes in the indivisible salvation of the whole world. An understanding to be considered valid must be adopted and mediated politically, relevant to the lives of all human beings within the society. In saying this we start with the idea of the basic transparency of political conditions and thus with the potential changeability of those conditions. Social change renders the change of men. Behavior patterns such as competition, for instance, or the stress of having to be successful, or the relation to present status-symbols, can be overcome if the society no longer requires such behavior.

Even if we turn away from the older, individualistic-oriented hopes of mankind that pointed to conversion, it still is not correct to think that institutions "create" the man—that is to say, that a change in the social structures will produce the new man just by itself. Critical thinking can only deny such a thesis. Nonetheless, under certain social conditions a liberated and liberating life style is almost impossible. There are lodgings which systematically destroy the relationship between mother and child. There are organizational patterns of work which define the relationship between the strong and the weak in Darwinian terms and so exterminate the humane capacities, such as the ability to help. Compassion and fairness stand as being undesirable for the process of production. If conditions are changed, if housing becomes humane and the forms of organization become cooperative, then the conditions for the possibility of another life style will be present—nothing more and nothing less.

THIS CONSCIOUSNESS of the changeability of society is today as indispensable as the critical non-mythological understanding of natural scientific contexts has been for Rudolf Bultmann. The theologian Bultmann was not ready to use the electric light and at the same time take over a three-storeyed mythological theory of life with regard to faith. But is it true that the world view, the metaphysics which presents to us wars, hunger and the neurotic state of our world is any less mythological? Can we admit we advocate birth control, and yet at the same time leave unquestioned the social mythology that certain classes must necessarily suffer, or the mythology that work must necessarily be alienating? Because this presupposition of "social fate" is no longer the conceptualization of our present world, the critique of ideologies assumes for us the place held by "demythologizing."

The awareness of the possibility of change cannot and does not need to be justified in terms of biblical thought. It is completely lacking in meaning to ask whether Jesus directly worked for the change of social conditions. We know that for him publicans were just that—publicans—and harlots, just harlots, without his asking who had made them publicans or harlots. He could not ask this question because—to speak in terms of Marxist philosophy—the powers of production had not yet reached the evolutionary stage at which social reconstruction could actually become a possibility. Thus to ask this question over against the New Testament as an ancient document is unhistorical and likewise pre-Marxist. It makes no difference if this question is posed as a criticism, as it is by Joachim Kahl, or whether it is posed in a positive sense by biblical theologians in order to affirm their own evaluation of the New Testament. The bases for change, in the comprehensive sense current today, did not exist at that time.

Given the state of affairs now, we cannot back away from the questions which arise out of it. We cannot permit ourselves to ignore why chemists work within the military-industrial complex, or why young men prefer the army to the peace corps. The current intellectual predisposition to the idea of the changeability of structures is now confronted by the Gospel; that means, it is criticized, modified and liberated through a hermeneutical process. By no means, though, is it dismissed out of hand. Within this hermeneutical process the question concerning Jesus' relationship to the changing of this world is modified. It is to be denied that Jesus effected such structural change in the direct sense in which the dialectic of an individual and society is viewed on the basis of social structures. However one cannot overlook that, in an indirect sense, the way in which Jesus thought and behaved broke open and changed the social struc-

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tures of the world in which he lived. Familial bonds and limits lose their old and natural rank through the new brotherhood (Mk.3:31-35), and there begins the historicizing of human relationships. Jesus asks: "Who is my mother, who is my brother?" The attachment to social orders such as the family, as well as to behavior such as piety, is suspended within the life of Jesus—for example, "Let the dead bury their dead" (Mt.8:22). Likewise the socially important division of people by means of education into those who are literate and informed about religious matters on the one side, and those who belong to social classes without this expertise, is divested of its dignity and importance: "You shall not let yourselves be called Rabbi. Do not call anyone on earth your father . . . You shall not let yourselves be called teachers."

The authority is suspended: patriarchal society is replaced by one that is fraternal. This quotation from Mt.23:8-10 expresses the continuation of Jesus' starting point by the congregation. Above all, Jesus' suspension of the then valid horizon of the society religiously defined, and yet achievement-oriented, naturally had its consequences. For the blind and the lame who had no access to the temple, to be cured meant at the same time to be religiously reintegrated into society. Jesus associated with women—that is to say, with declassified persons in regard to social status and religion. Jesus associated with the outcasts. With Jesus' proclamation begins an exodus out of familiar, traditional, cognitive, and success-oriented power structures. It was to this proclamation that those who needed an exodus into liberation have hearkened. "You know that the Princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them . . . But it shall not be so among you" (Mt.20:25f.). The religious liberation which this sentence expresses in a prescientific way can now be defined at least partly in a scientific way. Today we have the means for formulating in a more precise way the conditions under which power structures can be made transparent, controlled and finally suspended. No longer can we consider the conditions of life such as class, race, hereditary factors, sex, talent, or accident to be the fated texture out of which faith saves: such faith necessarily goes together with other-worldliness *("Entweltlichung")* because the only possible realm of freedom that can be imagined under such presuppositions can only lie outside of any concrete conditions, and at a distance from them. The understanding of faith as other-worldliness *("Entweltlichung")* is oriented towards the predisposition that there is a fated character to every reality and order.

A theology which understands itself as being non-political will attempt to describe the Gospel outside of this horizon of change which for us is vital. Such a theology demands as down-payment the surrender of our social and political reasoning and thereby the surrender of that reasoning which considers the world to be changeable. Such a theology considers history as a process which has come to an end, and interprets salvation as other-worldliness *("Entweltlichung")*.

Certainly there is a difference if, as in the Gospel of John, Jesus, at the end of a life full of attempts, doubts and fears, says "It is finished," and if this "It is finished" is systematized into a sentence which can always be said without costing anything, a sentence which includes the surrender of our predispositions about the possibility of change because it no longer maintains the necessity of change.

I should like to quote a few sentences from a widely popular book for religious teaching in high schools (in Germany). "If we ask about the future of mankind, the Bible points to this center . . . He said on the cross 'It is finished' (Jn.19:30). Now nothing new and exciting can happen ever again on earth. Whatever occurs or happens is of no importance for the world and mankind. Sickness and war, hunger and misery, luck and fortune, success and progress can strike us. But these events can change neither the world nor man."

Even these seemingly pure theological sentences carry massive political implications. The verbal manipulation of certain circumstances stands in the way of concrete change. The sensibility for suffering is suffocated—which means that a concealed brutalizing of the world takes place with the help of theology. The consciousness of a possible failure of life—that is, the sense of the tragic—is destroyed, and the consequence is a loss of humanity. The incorrect religious statement—that "Neither the world nor man can change" —destroys the liberating character of the Gospel. It also destroys the distinct consciousness of sin which belongs to a political theology, since it interprets events as being fated and denies that we ourselves are the ones who produce hunger and wars. Today we cannot understand sin in a private way as something which happens between two individuals or within a family. Sin to us is eminently a political, a social term: the sins of which Jesus reminds me and which he puts before my eyes are the sins of my

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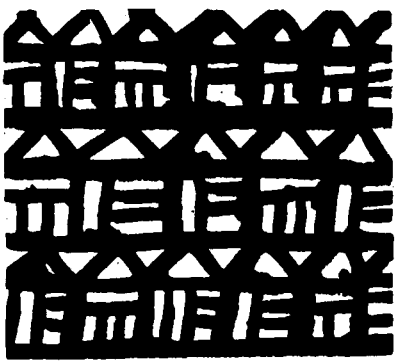
own people, of my own white race, of my own bourgeois and propertied class.

I live in a country where certain medicines and methods of healing are reserved for only the members of some particular social stratum. When I eat a piece of chocolate I cheat some peasant in Ghana—who, by the way, has not done anything to me—of about 20 cents. If I eat a banana, I help the United Fruit Company in exploiting Latin American slave-workers. Next to me stand people who live under the stress of a success-oriented society, and people who get and keep ulcers, or who become neurotic because they no longer can bear it. And I myself continue to stand next to them and just carry on. In the Federal Republic of Germany children head the lists of traffic casualties, but there is no cheap public transportation—yet the production of cars rises and rises. Are we to blame for all that? What do we have to do with this? Did I want this? These are our questions. But Christ does not allow us to get away with it that easily. Sin—this is what he has taught us, even if we tend to forget it—is the state of affairs in our world which accuses us. The dead in the slums of Brazil are ours because we feed from them and because we live well at their expense. Such things are not natural catastrophes or obscure laws of economics; rather, these are what the Christian tradition means by the term "original sin." That is to say, we are living within a context of incompetence and weakness, of hopelessness and wickedness, which we have not created ourselves but nonetheless support and preserve. We are the collaborators of sin.

Jesus Christ asks us what we have done "unto one of the least" of our brothers or what we have not done for one of them. In view of this question we discover the relation of incompleteness and weakness, of hopelessness and blindness, which is so characteristic of the white race and of the bourgeois propertied classes. But how can this relation be abolished, and how is this late capitalistic experience of impotence to be overcome? Or, to ask this question theologically, how does forgiveness of sins appear today?

In order to experience forgiveness of sins we need a group of persons which enables us to start anew. That is, we need at least partners who accept us as we are, who believe in our regret, who give us credit for an about-face. In the early church this social place was the congregation, which criticized and absolved the individual person. But where do we today have comparable groups in the Christian Church? Persons who have become conscious of their sins during the time of the Nazi regime in our society scarcely have a chance for an about-face if they are alone. They cannot really be assured of the forgiveness that is proclaimed by the priest, since, for example, their consciousness of sin is much more weighty and serious than can be dealt with by the formulae of absolution in our present ecclesiastical life.

An about-face would be more than forgiveness because it includes the future. Our world and our life hinder the possibility of an about-face since they isolate people from one another, and because they maintain principles that make for the division of mankind into the less privileged and the more privileged. People today live as much as is possible in small familial units. They organize their work into senseless and unconnected pieces. They reduce their needs only to those of consumption. The stress of an achievement-oriented society, the situation of competition, isolation, the deprivation of communication and the adhesion to privilege are



all typical of a society in which no one should make a mistake or, worse yet, admit a mistake. In such a society an about-face is excluded.

The power of the Gospel manifests itself in the fact that it crystallizes around itself groups who oppose and in fact abolish the above-mentioned pressures, first among themselves, then vis-à-vis everyone else. The liberation of all, which is intended by the Gospel, abolishes the late capitalistic isolation. "Jesus wants us to be friends"—this is the first sentence in the catechism of Don Mazzi which he wrote for the congregation of Isolotto. Thus within the groupings which the Gospel creates forgiveness will again be possible on a reciprocal basis. Out of the isolation and out of the success-oriented thinking, it makes an about-face possible. The experiences which people have with the Gospel of liberation then become expressible.

WHY STILL be a Christian? This is the question of many people today. We answer: for the sake of the liberation which we need. Some people, no doubt, will be dissatisfied with this answer, since it does not make an unmistakable distinction in regard to other groups which also work for a more humane society. But what kind of interest really stands behind such a desire for sharp distinctions? Is it not that of a truly misunderstood orthodoxy? I myself cannot understand the fear of some in the face of the fact that truth also appears in other places, or the fear

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that truth can use different languages. I suspect that it stems from a conception of competition which was totally unknown to Jesus. Nothing would have been more remote from him than the idea of separating the attempts to humanize the world which are done by non-Christians from those which are done by Christians. Jesus, for instance, tells the story of a man who fell among thieves and about the one who helped him. The compassionate man in this story of Jesus was of a false religion. Today we should tell this story as a story about a compassionate Communist. Jesus tells this story without using the word God. But do we not have to say that the story still speaks of God? Does it not deal with the end of fear and the beginning of freedom, since we exist for other people?

The phrase "God loves us," and the assertion that he loves every single person, is a mere theological commonplace which becomes a lie if it is not translated. The translation of this phrase is the world-changing action itself. The phrase needs a certain concreteness without which it remains empty. At the same time, though, this phrase necessarily transcends every perspective and is never exhausted or done away with. Within this affirmation we have a still greater claim than is satisfied in a momentary partial fulfillment, and a deeper need than is satisfied. Thus this statement makes us aware that the actualization which our life represents, and the love of God which we are, has started but is not yet wholly present. The letter of Christ which we ourselves are (2 Cor.3:3) is still being written and received and read. There exists no other letter of Christ —for instance, not a letter from Paul to the Corinthians or Philippians—which could replace the letter of Christ, since we ourselves are it.

Liberation is only possible as the liberation of all men. Dostoyevsky tells a story in his book, *The Brothers Karamazov*, which places the subject of guilt and forgiveness into this—in its broadest sense—political connection:

> Once upon a time there was a peasant woman and a very wicked woman she was. And she died and did not leave a single good deed behind. The devils caught her and plunged her into the lake of fire. So her guardian angel stood and wondered what good deed of hers he could remember to tell to God. "She once pulled up an onion in her garden," said he, "and gave it to a beggar woman." And God answered: "You take that onion then, hold it out to her in the lake, and let her take hold and be pulled out. And if you can pull her out of the lake, let her come to paradise, but if the onion breaks, then the woman must stay where she is." The angel ran to the woman and held out the onion to her. "Come," said he, "catch hold and I'll pull you out." And he began cautiously pulling her out. He had just pulled her right out, when the other sinners in the lake, seeing how she was being drawn out, began catching hold of her so as to be pulled out with her. But she was a very wicked woman and she began kicking them. "I'm to be pulled out, not you. It's my onion, not yours." As soon as she said that, the onion broke. And the woman fell into the lake and she is burning there to this day. So the angel wept and went away.

THIS STORY speaks about the fear which destroys life. The old woman lives without any interpersonal relationships. Only one tiny bit of her life has been opened to other people. Life for her was privacy and what she owned as an individual: "It is my onion, not yours." For her, possessing was the most important category. It is in owning something that people differ from one another. In owning things people find privilege. Even the possible forgiveness of sins for this woman becomes a matter of privilege, a privilege which she has to hold onto tightly and defend with all her might. She tries to come to terms with the God "above." But, still, the offered salvation does not pull her out of the rotation of her life, which consists of possessing things, being afraid, false security, holding tight and kicking others. It is only consistent to move from possessing to kicking someone. Through such a sequence the concentration upon the one goal disappears —that is, the concentration upon salvation. The old woman "forgot" to look at the angel and to allow herself to be drawn up by him: she turned in the opposite direction and concentrated upon the privilege, upon the fearful and aggressive attempt to maintain it. Thus she herself broke the onion by holding it and at the same time kicking the others. Her will, her interest was split; she wanted forgiveness, but by wanting this only for herself she destroyed everything, which is typical with wickedness.

Everything we hold onto means death. Wherever life is founded on possessing things, on privileges over against those who have none, there it destroys itself. By clutching it, it perishes. There can be no forgiveness for only a single person; where it is sought in the individual's immediate experience of God—that is, behind the backs of other people and without the painful detour through the world, there it destroys itself: the onion breaks.

As long as life is founded upon the privileges of possession, and in the securing of those privileges, then life destroys itself. Life is only life if everybody belongs to it with the same right and share. Or in terms of the metaphor: the more people who catch hold of the old woman, the more unbreakable the weak onion becomes. If to hold something means death, then communicating means life. No one can save himself alone and nobody is forgiven only for himself—that is, if the words "forgiveness" and "salvation" are to maintain their seriousness, namely the seriousness of rebirth.

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CLICHES IN THE GARDEN

THE STAGE

It was probably inevitable that Arthur Miller get around to the First Family. He has been heading that way ever since *After the Fall*, in which Quentin is not so much nagged by his own shortcomings as by a general sense of guilt, the post-Freudian variation on original sin. For even longer than that—for his entire career from *They Too Arise*, which he wrote in college in 1938, to *The Price*, his last Broadway play—Miller has been preoccupied with quarreling, loving brothers, sons of a weak father and a strong mother. Finally he has come home in earnest to the first, best sibling rivalry. Although Miller's earlier work can help explain his decision to retell the stories of the Fall, the first birth, the first murder, his choice turns out to be a tactical error, aesthetically speaking, for *The Creation of the World and Other Business* is not only Miller's worst play, but the dullest, the least dramatic, the most pretentious and the most vulgar reworking of the Biblical material that I can recall.

What Miller intends, I assume, is a play that is both a mocking comedy and a philosophical statement. The quality of the last can be seen in the titles that he gives his acts—for instance, "When Every Man Wants Justice, Why Does He Go On Creating Injustice?" These are presumably joking labels, like the chapter titles in *Tom Jones*, but Miller is not Henry Fielding nor was he meant to be; each of the acts asks one of "Three Questions On The Human Dilemma" and the treatment unfortunately tends to be as platitudinous as the titular framing of the question. God and Lucifer are friendly enemies, intellectual games-players after the fashion of *J.B.*, and Adam and his family, like J.B. and his family, become pawns in a struggle between the two, between "good" and "evil," between the desire for praise and the lust for power. There is a moment in the first act when Lucifer sounds a Shavian note. It is after the Fall, and he suggests that he and God share power to return man to innocence by showing him that God loves evil as well as good. For a hopeful instant there, I imagined that Miller was going to stick to Shaw's favorite theme about the dangerous emptiness of abstract nouns, but guilt has been so pervasive a fact for Miller in his 1960s plays that neither he nor his characters can simply walk away from it. In the last act, where the walk-away would have to occur, Cain does reject both God and the Devil, but he carries the Fall with him as he goes into exile; besides, he is a creation in the image of both these abstraction-mongers, having killed his brother in the name of "justice."

It occurs to me as I write these words that, being more Pelagian than Augustinian, I may be rejecting Miller for not being Shaw. I think not, however, for the weakness of *Creation* is less its view of man than the fact that that view is expressed through both philosophic and dramatic clichés. When God puts the mark on Cain, and it turns out to be a smile, the happy surprise of that invention only underlies what is missing in most of the play. If we take Acts II and III as variations on Act I, it is possible to see in the structure of the play a potentially powerful image in which each birth becomes the Creation restated and Cain's exile, every son's departure from the nuclear family, is the Fall revisited. For that to work, however, the play would have to have real characters, which it does not, and that is its fault.

Adam and Eve, and even God and Lucifer, are comic caricatures who, when they are not making high-toned philosophical points, are forced into situation-comedy bits and anachronistic jokes. I was mildly amused at the idea that God invented the bassoon in a moment of depression, but I was unmoved when the music of the spheres played "The Anniversary Waltz." My risibility threshold is not at issue here, however, for neither my laughter nor its absence can make such gags any more than flashy decoration. There are less peripheral jokes in the play, but they turn out to be more trying than the one-liners. Given the concern with their names of most of the Miller protagonists, one might have expected something more substantial than "labbit-rabbit" tries and wifely renaming in the too extended concern with the naming of the creatures in the Garden. As for the sex jokes, the pregnancy jokes, the modesty jokes, they are simply demeaning. At one point, God and Lucifer, looking down from heaven, comment, at unhappy length, on the innocence of Adam and Eve, on impulse unfulfilled because Adam does not understand where to put what. The result is simply gross, particularly to anyone who has seen the very funny, oddly touching scene in the Open Theatre *The Serpent* in which a stage-full of Adams and Eves discover one another and have a similar difficulty about deciding on the proper orifice.

The production had problems of its own. The performance styles clashed with one another without giving off sparks; Gerald Freedman's direction—surprisingly enough when one thinks of his *Peer Gynt* or the original *Hair*—was almost completely static; and the unattractive all-purpose set, efficient enough in a practical way, contributed little to either the serious or the funny side of *Creation*. Yet, these were really no more than symptoms. The play itself was the real problem.

I woke up the day after I saw *Creation* with some lines of Christopher Fry's running through my mind. As Thomas Mendip says in *The Lady's Not for Burning*:

> Why should these omnipotent bombinations
> Go on with the deadly human anecdote, which
> From the first was never more than remotely funny?

GERALD WEALES

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an exchange of views

'The Amnesty Issue'

Sydney, Nova Scotia

To the Editors: James Finn has made a brave attempt to handle the question of amnesty [Nov. 3]. Unfortunately it reads like an abstract moral treatise rather than one rooted in the current situation in the United States. Looking back on the moral upheavals of the '60s it is hard to believe that Mr. Finn's relationistic approach relates to the same era.

I would take issue in particular with his discussion of exiles who, as he says, "split." In the first place he mentions their failure to accept the "political obligations and opportunities offered to them." As far as I am aware, these fall into three categories: 1) Some, enabled by their religious background and/or education, could become conscientious objectors. This was not easy in the beginning or open to many, and the alternate service often awarded hardly resembles a positive contribution either to the individual or body politic. 2) Those with money or influence had the obvious options. 3) The remainder faced prison sentences—and I would not blame any 19-year-old for not seeing that as a "political opportunity." Mr. Finn neglects to mention that these options and obligations were not being "offered" to seasoned men but to 18- or 19-year-olds just finishing high school. He should surely be aware that U.S. secondary schools—both in methodology and content—do not prepare a man for moral decisions.

Finally, Mr. Finn quite rightly maintains that society is *not* a "collection of atomistic consciences." What is strange is that he never comes to grips with the fact that decisions are not made in a vacuum. Given the moral vacuum that many young people grew up in—remember that in the early and mid '60s neither church, state, school nor parents were likely to champion options other than obedience to the draft—it is admirable that as many men accepted personal responsibility for their lives as did. The exiles deserve more respect than to be dismissed as irresponsible.

Can meticulous logic which touches the exiles and leaves untouched the society's guilt bring to the United States the healing it so desperately needs?

JOAN BISHOP

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: James Finn's article, "The Amnesty Issue" [Nov. 3] is important as it continues and deepens the debate and discussion on an issue which will, more and more, be before the American people. That I agree with much of what Mr. Finn discussed is less important than the difference I have with parts of his argument.

First, Mr. Finn does not adequately define the context in which the amnesty issue will be debated. It is true, as the author suggests, that "the implementation of any amnesty will, of necessity, come only after the war's end." However, the terms of the peace agreement—an issue Mr. Finn doesn't touch upon—will be an important ingredient in how Americans view the amnesty issue (Sargent Shriver was on October 31 calling the initial outline of the resolution "surrender").

With 56,000 Americans killed and another 300,000 wounded, there are many, at least families and friends, of the dead and the wounded, who *need to know* that their personal pain and loss were not in vain. Are Communists to be involved in a coalition government in South Vietnam? Are the Vietnams to be united in the near future? Will North Vietnamese troops be left in the South? Is the United States really going to help rebuild North Vietnam via aid? Answers to these and similar questions, as defined in a final agreement, will be important in helping to shape the amnesty debate.

Also, Mr. Finn's implying that anything is going to be done in the whole area of war crime trials and/or in debating the applicability of the laws of war in future wars is an illusion (particularly if Nixon is elected). After all of the clear violations of the laws of war which have come through the military justice system in recent years, I can find scant evidence to suggest that there will be either governmental or public interest or energy to promote such a debate.

On the other hand, Mr. Finn may be contending that the conclusion of the war will find debates on both amnesty and crimes of war in order to stake out a rationale for an amnesty with conditions. In other words, if both debates were initiated at the war's end, one could theorize that a swap could be made: a *limited amnesty* for war crimes trials and/or stronger implementation procedures of the laws of war in the future. This is a trade-off that may appeal to our "political" consciousness but it would only further "the sorry state of moral/political discussion in the country."

Another issue advanced by Mr. Finn includes a conditional amnesty which would require alternative service as an "honorable way for honorable men to reintroduce themselves into the political society." Finn's position here flows from his understanding that deserters who willingly absented themselves from the country, while acting on moral grounds, cannot expect amnesty as a "political right" because in leaving the United States, "they removed the contribution they might have made."

This assumption too easily divides moral and political obligation. Many deserters I have known and from whom I have heard, rigorously weighed the political consequences of their act before leaving the country. Would it be better to go to jail? Would it be better to wind up in a military stock-

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ade? When men have left the country, they often have involved themselves in continued anti-war activity. To suggest that one's leaving the country was not a political act as well as a moral one simply misses the reality of available evidence. Indeed, more than most, deserters have helped to form my conscience and political judgment far more than I can measure. I would submit to Mr. Finn that those who have "absented" themselves have, in fact, *been among us* for those who have had ears to hear and eyes to see.

Finally, given the above, I see no reason for the persons outside of government, as a matter of principle or strategy, to place conditions on their demand for amnesty. Certainly our own history on this issue does not suggest this course. If those who rebelled and helped create the Civil War could be granted unconditional amnesty, then certainly those who refused to kill in Indochina 100 years later can be accorded the same treatment.

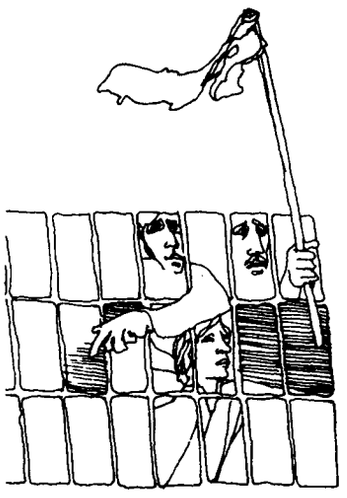
RICHARD R. FERNANDEZ
Co-Director,
Clergy and Laymen Concerned

Reply

I am grateful that Ms. Bishop credited me with meticulous logic and bravery. Moral and abstract, I accept. However, to term my brief article a treatise does it more than justice, and to term it rationalistic—implying a debasement of the rational—is inaccurate.

There are two substantive points in Ms. Bishop's considered letter. First, I did not and do not label all exiles as irresponsible, and I have real respect for many of them. Their choice was hard and most were given little moral/political guidance prior to their decision to leave the country. As one who entered the Army at 19, I know how ignorant and unprepared one can be at that age. I do not see, however, that Ms. Bishop has said anything that would have enlightened me then or these young men today—although sympathy and support for one's own decision is always welcome.

Second, Ms. Bishop has touched on what I see as the weakest part of the position for which I and others argue. Consignment to prison is a possible, though unpleasant, option for those who resisted service in the Armed



Forces. But as Willard Gaylin has testified in his book on resisters who accept that option, existing prison conditions are frequently destructive of body and spirit. It is not only on the battlefield that one finds casualties of this war in Indochina. This is one reason why I would wish to see prison sentences kept to a minimum or replaced by productive alternative service.

To take in order the points Mr. Fernandez makes. Yes, the terms of the peace agreement are important, but I cannot be certain of them, nor can Mr. Fernandez, nor anyone else who thinks amnesty is worth discussing *now*. And there is no way to assure people that those who were killed or wounded in Vietnam did not suffer in vain. That judgment will depend upon whether one thinks the war is justifiable and, in those terms, successful. I think it is not, I presume Mr. Fernandez thinks it is not; others will differ with us.

I would like to think Mr. Fernandez was wrong about the possibility of useful public debate on the laws of war and war crime. I fear, however, that the disgraceful state of that discussion at present and the lack of interest shown by those who have both the requisite information and responsibility justify his skepticism. Though I think this question is closely related to amnesty, I did not intend to suggest some sleazy trade-off between the two issues.

I do not divide moral and political obligation in the sense that Mr. Fernandez suggests. The deserters did not make moral judgments in opposition to or apart from political judgments. Their actions were simultaneously moral and political, that is, subject to *both* moral and political judgment. Discriminations, however, are necessary. It is possible, for example, to admire the moral courage and bemoan the political ineptitude that took Che Guevara to Bolivia, where he had no indigenous support and few trusted followers, where he did not know the language of Indians he intended to liberate and whose terrain he did not know, and where, not surprisingly, he came to a sorry end.

As for the exiles and their contributions, I have come to my own position for the reasons I gave in the article, but also because of discussions I had years ago about the Cuban exiles. Castro and his supporters in this country argued that those who left Cuba, who were not participating in or contributing to that country's efforts, had forfeited their rights to criticize. They could recover their rights when they resumed their responsibilities. I think that argument carries weight and—unless one resorts to a double standard—it applies to American exiles as well.

Mr. Fernandez's last paragraph is simply bewildering. In our own history, amnesty with conditions is in fact the rule. And a concept of citizenship that says "persons outside of government," that is, most of us, should not express our opinions on a question as important as amnesty, is passing strange. Or is it only that those who support the "correct" position, unconditional amnesty, should express their opinion. I can't believe Mr. Fernandez means either of these things. I'm sure we would agree that on a question as difficult and emotional as amnesty—where no one has a corner on wisdom—we need all the helpful exchange we can get. I appreciate what Mr. Fernandez has both initiated and provided himself.

JAMES FINN

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MR. DOOLEY ON HATE

DENNIS HALE

'It's the power of imitation, same as in the nuclear explosion'

IT was a rainy evening in November when Hennessey walked through the doors of Dooley's Saloon, the autumn gloom trailing behind him like a mournful hound. Hennessey was unhappy, there was no mistaking it. He shuffled over to the bar and sank woefully upon a stool. He took a soggy newspaper from under his arm, placed it on the bar and then removed his equally soggy cap. This he attempted to dry by holding it over the littered floor and giving it a few vigorous twists. But here his efforts to deal with the weather ended. He paid no further attention to his clothes, and did not even bother to remove his overcoat. He shivered a little, instead, and fixed his gaze on the bottles behind the bar.

Dooley knew his friend well and recognized the signs immediately. An election was in the offing. The calendar said so, for one thing. More importantly, though, the soggy newspaper said so. Hennessey never read the papers any more except during a political campaign. Doing so never failed to make him miserable.

"Evenin', Hennessey. I see you've been reading the papers again. I thought you swore off."

"Evenin', Dooley, and a good evenin' I wish it was. Let's have the usual. I know I swore off, Dooley, but I can't help it. I was passing the cigar store over by the shop this evening, and there on the stand was this newspaper, just standing up looking at me, tempting me shamelessly, and I told myself, Hennessey, you've been ignorant too long. Pick up that newspaper, and see what's been happening in the Republic. So I did."

Dooley set a short glass full of whiskey on the bar and waited for the inevitable. Sure enough. Hennessey picked up the glass and held it to the light, squinting into the amber liquid as if it contained the answer to a riddle. This was also a certain sign of an election. Normally Hennessey would gulp the first drink and ask for another, without once looking at his glass. But affairs of state made him a cautious drinker; he took twice as long to consume a given quantity of alcohol.

"And what did you learn, Hennessey?"

Hennessey took a sip of his drink and made a face. "Dooley, the Republic is in a terrible mess. Everywhere you look it's hate, hate, hate. Group against group, this one against that one, . . . Where will it end, Dooley? And what's the cause of it all, can you tell me that?"

"Hennessey, there's one man to blame for all of this, and that man is Stokely Carmichael."

Hennessey was a little startled by this news, but knew better than to dismiss Dooley's advice out of hand. But he was a simple man, Hennessey was, so he simply stared at his glass some more, and then said, "But Dooley, how can one man be responsible for all this mess?"

"By setting off a chain reaction, Hennessey, that's how. It's the power of imitation, same as in a nuclear explosion. You remember, back in the old days, when everybody was talking about brotherly love between the races, and Overcomin', and all that grand poetry, Stokely Carmichael, and a bright young lad he was, if ever there was one . . ."

"Aye, the Carmichaels were always quick ones, I'll give them that."

"Well, now, Hennessey, I'm not sure we're talking about the same Carmichaels, but never mind. As I was saying, Stokely was a bright lad who could tell the difference between water and the real thing, if you catch my meaning, and this wonderful jabber began to get on his nerves. So finally he said right out what a lot of the other lads had been thinkin', but were too shy to say first. What he said was quite a bombshell, let me tell you. He said he didn't know as how he *wanted* to be friends with white folks in the *first* place, and wished they'd all go home and leave the civil rights business to its original founders."

"I still don't see what this has to do with the mess we're in."

"You will, Hennessey, you will. Here, now, your whiskey has evaporated, what with you starin' at it and all. Anyway, as I was saying, this came as a terrible shock to the white folks, who were all under the delusion that black folks loved them. Not the real ignorant ones, mind you, like you find in swamps and such places, but the more educated ones, Hennessey, like you and me. Anyway, when they found out that black people didn't love them after all, they couldn't believe it at first. So they said poor Stokely was mad. But in the meantime the chain reaction had set in and the bomb was about to go off. All over the country, the young black folks imitated Stokely. They called together grand meetings of the educated white folks and gave them holy hell, right to their faces, and even charged them admission fees to get yapped at. Hennessey, it was a wonderful sport, and if you've never been to one of these camp meetings, you've missed one of the finer flowers of a benighted age, as the poets say."

"But Dooley, why did people come to these things if they just got yelled at?"

Dooley gave his friend a look that wavered between pity and admiration. "If I didn't know it was your gentle

DENNIS HALE, *a New York free-lance writer, recently moved to Boston.*

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nature talking, I'd think you were soft in the head. Listen, you remember Francis R. Havenner, the Golden Gloves wonder of a few years back?"

"The one that was so bad?"

"The very one Hennessey. Francis R. Havenner. Did you ever wonder why he kept climbing back into the ring, just to get the stuffing knocked out of him, over and over again? Because it was better bein' on the inside, flat on his back, than bein' on the outside, where he could only watch. People came to these meetings, Hennessey, because it was better than bein' ignored.

"Well, naturally, after awhile they got tired of it, punch drunk, you might say, cause they were doin' all the taking and none of the giving. That was the secret Stokely discovered. The white folks couldn't hate him back because that made them feel guilty. But not wanting to feel left out of things, they had to keep coming to these meetings and being called all sorts of foul names and accepting slurs on their honor and their manhood and terrible things of that general type.

"Some of the less sturdy ones fell out along the way, some of the younger ones, mostly, who were so mad at not having anybody to hate back that they turned to loud music and terrible drugs, and took to wearing old clothes and living in slums in hopes that Stokely and his pals wouldn't notice them when it came time for another camp meeting. But finally somebody discovered a solution. A solution, Hennessey, that was so brilliant, that you'll want to drink to it when I tell you, so I'll fill your glass. Somebody must have swiped your whiskey when you wasn't looking."

But Hennessey hardly noticed as Dooley filled his glass, so intent was he to learn the solution to the problems of white people.

"And what was the solution, Dooley, and what does it have to do with the terrible state of the Republic?"

"It was simple. White people started hating each other. And you'll see what that has to do with the Republic if you'll just think a minute. First, it solved the main problem, which was the white folks' disadvantage when it came to hating. They couldn't hate Negroes, because that's what the government and the papers and the preachers and everybody had been saying was wrong with the country. But while they'd been saying it was wrong to hate a man because his skin color was different, they neglected to say anything about hating someone whose skin was the same color as your own.

"Well, some of the kids got onto it first, as kids will. They started out disliking older people at first, so you had the famous Generation Gap which I'm sure you've heard so much about. Then they started narrowing the focus a little. Policemen were easy to hate, because . . . well, you know how policemen are, Hennessey. So white kids started calling the police pigs, which they learned, remember, from attending Stokely's camp meetings.

"Now the chain reaction was working just fine. But the older people were still left out of the fun. They couldn't hate Negroes, and they couldn't very well admit to hating their own kids without feeling terrible about it. See, that's the ticket, Hennessey, you need somebody to hate who you can feel *good* about hating, like Republicans, otherwise it's not any fun, and you get to brooding and feeling sinful. So the next step was inevitable. Here, Hennessey, have another drink. I'm thinking you'll need it."

"What, Dooley, what was the next step?"

Dooley poured two drinks this time and took a sip from his own before speaking.

"The next step was for the women to start in hating the men."

"Mother of God!"

"Precisely, Hennessey, that's exactly it. Ah, the ladies, Hennessey, they'd been working up to it for a long time. Oh, they denied it, right enough, but now that the whole country was gettin' into the hate business with a vengeance, the ladies picked their natural enemy, which is men. Now, once the women and men started goin' at it, the chain reaction was workin' overtime, and everybody got into the fight. Some of the white folks even decided that it was OK to hate Negroes after all. Then pretty soon some of the other darker minorities saw what they were missing and picked up on the game. So you had the Mexicans, and the Chinese, and the Indians, and the Puerto Ricans, everybody and his cousin hating white folks, and white folks hating each other, in more ways than you could count. Women and men, left and right, young and old, white and black, black and brown —because pretty soon, Hennessey, there weren't enough white folks left for everybody to hate, so you had Negroes hating Puerto Ricans, and Puerto Ricans hating Cubans, and Mexicans hating Negroes, and Indians hating Mexicans. You had a million groups sprouting all over, holding meetings where everybody could cuss out everybody else, and beat their drums, so to speak, and say how grand they were compared to everyone else. On and on it went, Hennessey, because once a chain reaction gets goin', nothing can stop it. Men and women of the homosexual persuasion, if you don't mind my bringing up a touchy subject, started into denouncing men and women of the other persuasion. And then *they* fell into the battle between men and women, and they were off again, six ways from Sunday, and people were getting knocked on the head from behind, and it was all as furious as a Saturday night brawl where nobody remembers on Sunday what the fight was about or who was in it. A rabbi out in New York City told the Jews even *they* could hate people again, which they hadn't been allowed to do before, and then along came the Italians, who said they wanted to share in the action, and they had a list of things and personages

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to hate, and a long list it was, too.

"So, you see, from one thing and another, there isn't hardly a person left in the whole Republic who doesn't have a favorite group to hate and feel good about it, and all because of Stokely Carmichael. And that, Hennessey, is why the Republic is in such a fine fettle."

Hennessey was silent for a moment, while Dooley wiped the bar and poured a new pair of drinks.

"So you see, Hennessey, what poor old Stokely started. A small lad, by the way; he had sense enough to marry well and move back to the old country."

"But where will it end, Dooley? Where will it all end?"

"Ain't it obvious, now? There's only one group left that hasn't got into the fight yet, and I predict they'll get into it real soon. The next step, Hennessey, is for the Catholics to start hatin' the Protestants again. And when that happens, they'll know we've been *right* all along."

"We?"

"Sure, it's what we've been sayin' all along. Ireland, Hennessey, is the Mother of Nations. Cheers."

BOOKS

THE VIEW FROM THE CHOIR LOFT

Bare Ruined Choirs: Doubt, Prophecy and Radical Religion

GARRY WILLS

Doubleday, $7.95

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

Garry Wills, as S. L. A. Marshall observed recently, is one of the better wordsmiths; in fact, he may well be the best around. In his usage words become malleable, full of curious resonances, fraught with unexpected meanings. *Bare Ruined Choirs,* his new book, is replete with statements and phrases as arresting—if not as melodious—as his Shakespearean title: "an atmosphere poisoned, as it were, by incense";

"(Adam) fell to his 'own flesh,' the rib that yearned outward and turned back wearing a different face . . ." The total effect of this report on the decline of the church is baroque—of soaring structure on improbable base, the whole awhirl with ornamentation, analogies and arabesques of adjectives, studded with Latin tags. The words sometimes seem to say more than he really means.

"The story of the church's demise is not one of heretical betrayers, but of fatal insufficiencies in its very fabric; and this tale runs parallel to revelations of weakness in our society at large. In Pope John and President John, liberals at last got the kind of leaders they thought would suffice; and found that this was not enough. The System, even given bright leadership, did not work. We are witnessing a basic failure in authoritative standards; they no longer convince, because they can barely stand."

That seems very final. But *demise*? Well, not quite. He comforts us almost immediately: "So Rome is always dying (partially) from head down, while being (in part) resurrected from feet up . . . it has always been the task of the prophetic church . . . to redeem the kingly church. Peter needs Paul—as Pope Innocent needed St. Francis, Pope Urban (*sic*) needed St. Catherine or Pope Paul II needed Ignatius. As Paul VI needs Dan Berrigan. The Christian message is not authenticated from a throne." Isn't this the ancient consolation—*ecclesia semper reformans*? In our age it is more. It is responsibility to a people which certifies a prophet, Wills says, and the responsibility to a radical biblical people saying no to power today includes Protestants like William Stringfellow and Jews like Arthur Waskow, as well as the Berrigans. Ecumenism gets somewhat short shrift in this book, but aren't these prophets the fruit of the movement—heirs of what we used to call the dialogue of action?

Indeed in the two final chapters on radical religion which have such freshness and feeling, Wills' conclusion—shorn of "alarums and excursions"—is like ecumenist Aelred Graham's in his recent book *The End of Religion* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971): "The Christian Church, like its individual members, may gain rather than lose by becoming fully aware of its limitations—envisaging the prospect that it could have a long, painful, and as yet unsuspected pilgrimage to make before it is guided 'into all truth'." But the method is very different.

Wills' book is compelling because the language is charged with emotion, personal, arbitrary. "I knew he was angry by this token," said Virginia Woolf of another writer. "When I read what he wrote I thought, not of what he was saying, but of himself. When an arguer argues dispassionately he thinks only of the argument; and the reader cannot help thinking of the argument, too." The reader goes through this book thinking of Garry Wills.

Whence this furious distaste—for liberals, for aesthetics, for liturgists, for women of any achievement? In what way does Nestor's son go forward "fighting under Nestor's shield" (from the dedication)? It is Wills' technique to attack the greater through the lesser, to find the whole "implied in the parts" as he puts it. But does he really take the paroxysms of the church in America for the final gasps of the universal church? Or the troubles of the Jesuits for the troubles of all American Catholics—is this not the "extreme taken for the type," to use another phrase of his?

Is it fair to raise such questions? Dom Aelred thinks they *must* be raised: "For a writer striving to reach the heart of religion the obligation to be open and self-revealing . . . appears to be bound up with his whole project." He notes that Newman found it necessary to make his *Apologia* a disclosure of

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his own personality and concludes that in the 1970's Victorian reticence becomes lack of candor. "How much more demanding is the challenge to hide nothing of one's life that could bear upon what one says and why one says it."

One is not to know that about Wills, however. One can only puzzle about it. Even in the chapter "Memories of a Catholic Boyhood" he prefers the generic and distance-putting "we." He seems to have come late to knowledge of movements like the Catholic Revival and liturgical renewal and sometimes makes odd errors—putting Irish-born Abbot Marmion among the French intellectual elite is just one example.

A reader, observing that one-fourth of this small volume deals with the Jesuits, is not surprised to learn that the author spent five years as a Jesuit seminarian. But what is one to make of his attitude toward women? Does it spring from the seminary or from ethnic history? He alludes disparagingly to Irish matriarchy. He makes slighting references to "female piety." The most devastating attack in the entire book, however merited, is reserved for the former Sister Jacqueline Grennan. No man gets its like. He lingers over Father Philip Berrigan without ever mentioning Sister Elizabeth McAllister. He grants Dorothy Day grudging admiration in the final chapters but scornfully calls her one of the "earth mothers" of the liberals in an earlier one. "The liberal world was largely shaped and cared for by female heroines and attendants (like Sigrid Undset and Edith Stein)," he declares and we are to understand that this is a weakness of the liberal world. That it was a weakness shared by the world at large, even by the Nobel prize committee, is beside the point. It is not shared by Garry Wills.

Fortunately, although we do not know why Wills feels as he does, we do know why he has given us *Bare Ruined Choirs*. There is, first of all, the revival of interest in Catholics. Wills finds it the ultimate irony that political analysts have predicted that the seventies might be the decade of Catholic power in America: "The Catholics' hour had come, though they did not seem to know it, had come too late, just as their church was disintegrating."

The news is not wholly welcome. "In some ways it was—what Lenny Bruce used to call it . . . 'the only *the* church' . . . the least changeable part of our religious landscape." Still the news holds a macabre fascination. The writer was able to proclaim it first in *Esquire*, *Playboy* and the *N.Y. Times* under titles like "Sex and the Single Priest." Such articles, some of them expanded now and provided with footnotes, are the backbone of the text and they make for fast-paced, dizzying reading with their dazzling verbal progressions and ingenious parallels: "The Two Johns: Rome and the Secular City"; "The Two Jackies." These are interspersed with more sober critiques—of Teilhard de Chardin and John Courtney Murray, reshaped, one surmises, from earlier offerings in conservative journals and columns.

The book is described by the publisher as a supplement to Wills' successful *Nixon Agonistes*. In that book he was, he said, taking up a lover's quarrel with his country "and lovers take delight, even when quarreling, in the particular features of the beloved." It seems to be for the same love of country that he has written about the crumbling "of the institutional church." "Understanding this process (i.e., the "flame-out" of Catholicism) should not only tell us much about Catholics and their troubles, but about our country and these times—since belief in all our large national myths is now endangered." One closes the book knowing that he has gone beyond his undertaking; through Daniel Berrigan he begins also to love the church. He may even come to love its members.

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REVIEWERS

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Youth in Politics

SIDNEY HYMAN

Basic Books, $8.50

Parties

JOHN S. SALOMA III & FREDERICK H. SONTAG

Knopf, $7.95

WILLIAM J. LANOUETTE

Last month's elections have turned up mountains of raw data for the political analysts who must now try to make some sense of them all. It has also opened up new networks of raw nerves, new prides, resentments and fears, which more ordinary folk must now try to live with. For both groups, the days ahead will not be especially easy.

Obviously, no conclusive authority or viewpoint will arise to make the whole electoral hodge-podge seem simple, although, now at hand are two books that can at least help to clarify some of the more persistent confusions. Each focuses on a vital aspect of modern American politics, and each offers some useful and sensible perspectives. In the mayhem that now surrounds us, that—at least—is a start.

In *Youth in Politics*, Sidney Hyman, a social scientist at the University of Chicago, begins with a demographic fact and ends with an optimistic prediction. Along the way he also puts together a coherent chronology of the varieties of political experience that young people have shared during the last dozen years.

His fact is that in this decade 22 percent of the voters are "young" (26-years-old or under)—a rise from 12 percent during the Eisenhower years. They are the babies of the postwar Boom: more pragmatic, more liberal and less partisan than their parents.

They are also more critical, and more skeptical, than their parents are, of the political institutions that now surround them. For, in the past decade or so of student-oriented activism, civil-rights protests, humanistic ideals, free-speech campaigns, anti-draft and anti-

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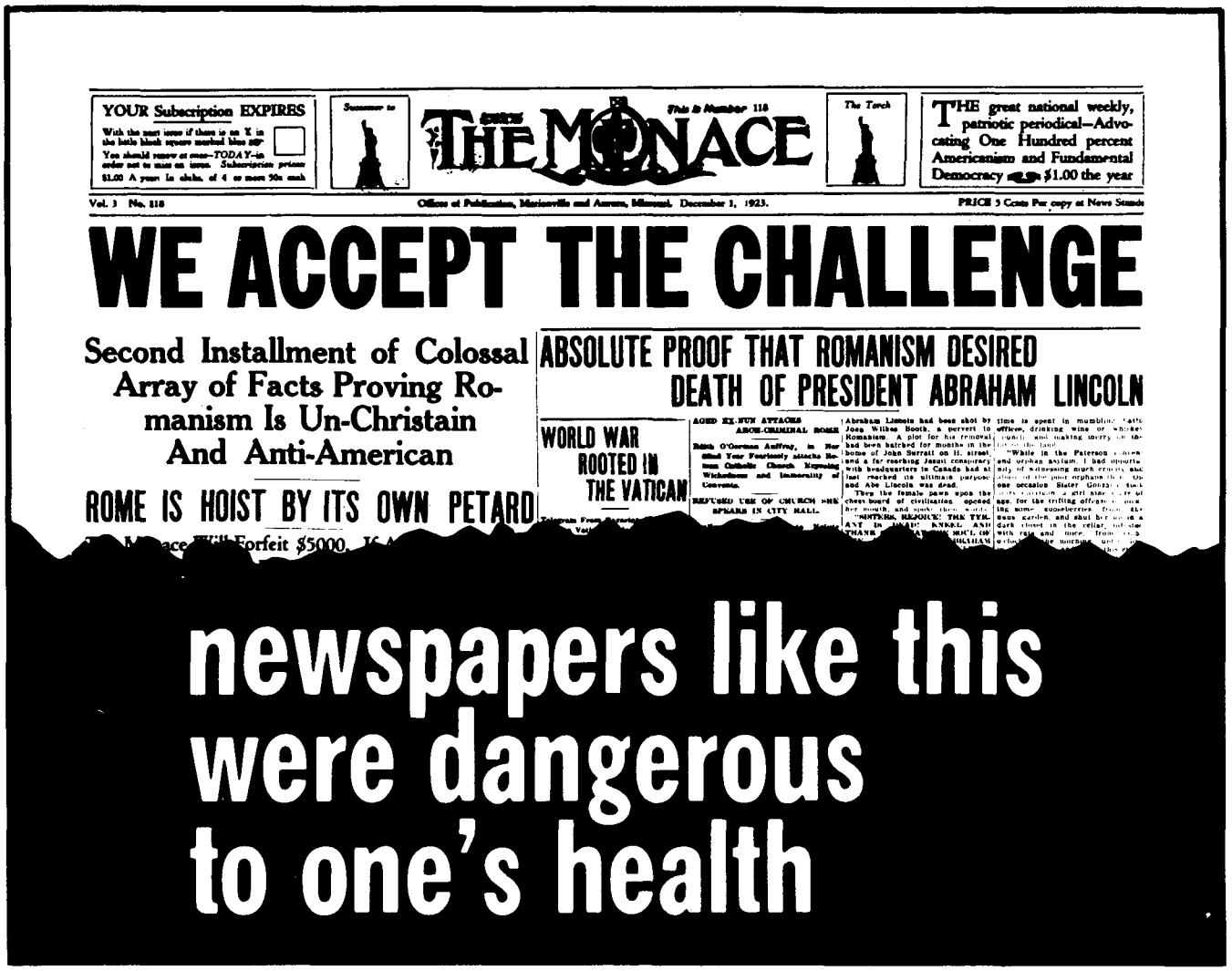
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WORLD WAR ROOTED IN THE VATICAN
newspapers like this were dangerous to one's health

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war marches, bombings, boycotts and mobilizations, there has been much in modern politics to turn them on, and to turn them off.

Not every young person was politicized, Hyman points out; and not every moment was necessarily a forward step. However, he does conclude that the young people who did participate "had the courage to open their eyes to American politics, the magnanimity to learn the lessons it taught, and the will to apply these lessons in a democratic context."

The principal problem with this assessment, and one that Hyman himself admits to, is that it describes almost exclusively the work of college activists in the 1970 Congressional election. It gives practically no information about non-college youth. And, although students might be more conspicuous and more familiar to academic analysts, they are hardly representative of their entire generation. What do young hardhats and hairdressers think about politics? Unfortunately, Hyman doesn't seem to know.

Complementing Hyman's book, and answering some of the questions he raises, is a comprehensive and imaginative study of today's partisan struggles. *Parties*, by John Saloma III and Frederick Sontag, a political scientist and research consultant, respectively, first tells us what modern political parties are. Then, it also predicts what they might become: "the real opportunity for effective citizen politics." The authors have put together a self-styled "kind of political *Whole Earth Catalog*" that surveys the confusing state of partisan politics and attempt to offer some tools for setting them straight.

The book describes the parties' problems with holding national conventions, their lack of constructive leadership in Congress, and their failure to govern (instead, they just campaign). Perhaps more disturbing are the shallow coverage of party politics "consultants," who run campaigns the way they would promotion gimmicks, beauty pageants, or spy missions.

After reviewing the many problems confronting our modern parties, the authors give several practical recommendations for improvements. To enhance the parties' ability to govern, for example, they propose that they "should develop broad new tests . . . which would be applied as an integral part of the dominating and electoral process," and should "develop long-range programs for identifying, recruiting, and training political executives." In this, and most other areas, their recommendations are clear and practical.

The one subject that seems to give the authors the most trouble, however, is the "consultants." After reviewing their vast and growing powers, Saloma and Sontag recommend that "representative party commissions . . . develop party guidelines for the use of political consultants and the investment of party funds in the new political technology." Can you imagine Bob Dole or John Mitchell going along with that? Or, the authors recommend that "all political consulting firms and polling organizations . . . should . . . file public reports on the extent of their campaign involvement." I doubt that the founders of the November Group, or James W. McCord, Jr., will be especially eager to comply.

Indeed, those "consultants" seem to creep into the authors' thinking about the future of individual involvement, too. This is most evident when they predict that "citizens may turn increasingly to temporary organizations or ad hoc coalitions directed toward specific problems [rather than parties] in much the same way that parties and candidates are relying on temporary campaign organizations created by professional political consultants."

Do they fear that these pros have all but taken over the parties? Not exactly. But implicit in the authors' optimistic accounts of popular party reforms (as seen in this year's Democratic convention) is the assumption that the most likely alternative to such reforms is an elite team of professional manipulators (as seen in this year's Republican campaign).

That is probably the clearest political choice of the century. And the decisions of Nov. 7 are a clear sign of where we're heading.

A Child Called Noah: A Family Journal

JOSH GREENFELD

Holt, Rinehart, $5.95

In a Darkness

JAMES A. WECHSLER with NANCY F. WECHSLER and HOLLY W. KARPF

Norton, $5.95

H. R. WOLF

Psychopathology is a philosophic problem for Pirandello: the ultimate mystery of Being, a premise that shadows our century. James Wechsler's *In a Darkness*—a memoir of his son Michael, a suicide at the age of twenty-six—and Josh Greenfeld's *A Child Called Noah*—a biography in diary form of his autistic son Noah from birth to age five—*both* draw the reader into versions of this mystery. In reading these books and other recent studies of suicide and suicidology, we are doubtless searching for meaning at this advanced epistemological moment of modern history. In neither case, though, do we learn, despite the careful and anguished amassing of clues, *why* Michael Wechsler took his life, *why* Noah could not (refused to?) enter a

God & Politics

R. L. Bruckberger

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world eager to love him. The foundations of identity are not explored.

Both books, in their loving efforts to reconstitute lives, create, unwittingly, a sense of absence and add more missing "pieces" to the current skeptical puzzle of uncertainty, randomness, game theory, and disorder. In confronting lives which *seem* empty, we are forced to question the meaning of personality and character. If there is a drama, then, in these two books—separate from the rituals and ceremonies of loss—it is the conflict between rational and integral approaches to Mind (Freud, Marx), embraced in some measure by both father-authors, and the post-organic Borgesian maze.

With journalistic courage and energy, James Wechsler follows the psychiatric and psychoanalytic thread from Michael's years at the Fieldston School, Harvard, and the East Village through *eight* changes of treatment (each promising and disillusioning in turn) to the suicide and elegaic bafflement. If there is a reason or hypothesis about Michael's emotional anguish, it remains hidden in the mind of one of his therapists. Bound by loyalty, analytic protocol, and perhaps, failure of judgment, none of Michael's therapists communicated openly with James and Nancy Wechsler about their son. (If *In a Darkness* has a reproach, it is this failure of trust and communication between parents and therapist.)

For Josh and Foumi Greenfeld, the conflict between organic rationalism and sceptical effacements (dissolving meta- and anti-realities) turns different threads of the screw. Noah is, at times, beautiful, even beatific, in his inacessability. One must resist thinking of Noah's autism as a kind of schizophrenic Eden and his regression as a Laingian redemption. Whatever grace or innocence Noah possesses is part, as his father believes, of his neurological impairment and brain-damage. No one, not even the most stubborn psychedelic romantic would pay the price of this paradox. But, there it is, thematically, as a para-rational lure: a non-functional innocent child in a "functional" and aggressive world (the years of the journ-

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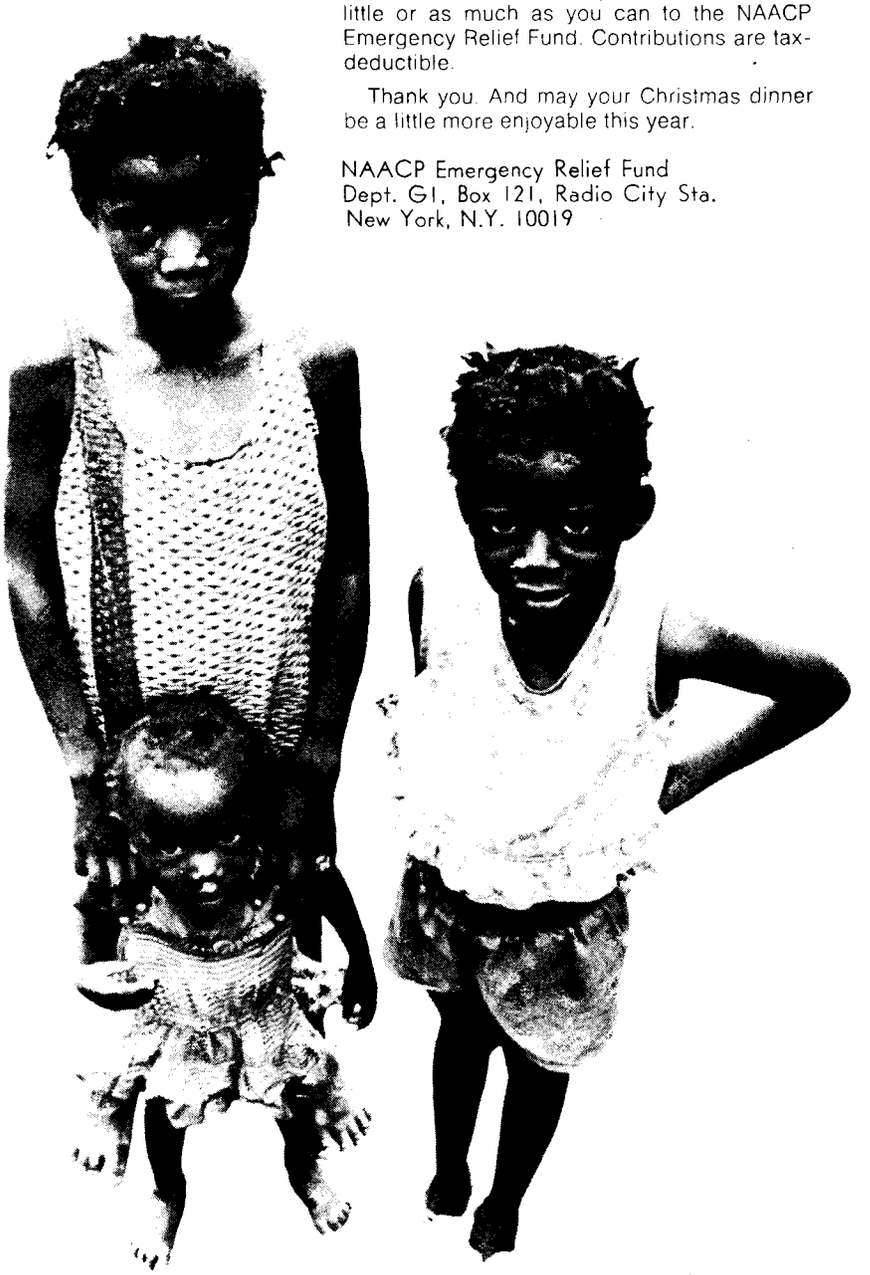

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al include Vietnam, Cambodia and Kent State).

Noah's care is always *beyond* rational explanation, but the method of minimalist improvement—the operant conditioning methods of Dr. Lovaas at U.C.L.A.—has the appearance of rationality: a set procedure for proper response to stimuli, some record of progress. The parent who wants to know his child and bring him into the world through knowing him is encouraged to surrender this humanism for the scientism of procedure and heuristic strategies: "But the trouble with Noah is," says Dr. Lovaas, "we really still can't get a good look into him." Dr. Lovaas is not an Orwellian caricature. He is a dedicated behaviorist doing the best job that he can. He does not pretend to understand, or relate to, the human psyche; only how to change behavior.

He is, somehow, *our* psychologist, a post-rational transformer of unintentional behavior. He is, after all, able to help Noah utter a few words (the vocabulary he had lost at age two), he makes advances in Noah's toilet training, and he leaves Josh and Foumi Greenfeld with learning techniques that may help lighten their daily burden. If they must make Noah a "robot" to avoid the terror of institutional care, if the father goes, without self-pity, to observe a noted dog trainer, "hoping to learn about his training and conditioning techniques," we recognize this as our kind of behavior in the face of the unknown: the humane application of systems analysis, the necessary, if crude, cybernetic model of human functioning. If Josh Greenfeld believes, at times, in a psychogenic or telic model of Noah's autism, he sees it, finally, as a genetic lapse (for which there is some family history): a chromosomal preordainment, a misfiring of the biochemical trajectory we once called the psyche. We must now, it seems, see our humanity through the double helix. This may be the truth, but what are we to do with it?

The value of these two books, neither of which is written finely enough to recreate the precious lives we want to cherish, lies in the concrete experience of psychic pain we experience as readers. Because of the specificity of these lives, Michael's, Noah's, we should be moved to a social and political awareness of the vast reforms needed to provide adequate care and research for the untold Michaels and Noahs. The failure of these books, to come back to Pirandello, is a failure of philosophic attitude, a failure to analyze the significance of the displacement of selfhood in our time, of our cultural willingness, even modishness, to let the self dissolve as a reality, *even* as a theoretical possibility. If the self is lost and existence is rendered knowable in only bio-chemical and functional terms, what could be a possible foundation for a human therapy? If identity is molecular and operational, how are we to arrive at ethical valuations?

It is perhaps asking too much for either of these writers to generalize from the terrible problematics of their lives; but they present themselves as *writers*, as well as parents, and, although one can respect the mastery of experience made possible through *telling*, it is not enough. Lodged in both books are questions of an ultimate nature: is there a self? can we know the other? are there better and worse ways of nurturing the self? do contemporary skepticisms and therapies substitute epistemological mystifications for hidden, integrated potentials? Are we willing to give up meaning in the face of new methodologies? are we undergoing a separation in the languages of identity and loss of identity similar to, and as irreconcilable as, that which took place in the Eighteenth Century between sanity and insanity? Roland Barthes describes the Death of the Author; these authors describe the disappearance of the self. Description is not enough at this terminal point of humanism.

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Tired Dragons: Adapting Church Architecture to Changing Needs

EDWIN C. LYNN

Beacon Press, $12.50

MAURICE LAVANOUX

Anyone long interested in the evolution of church architecture will find himself in familiar territory while reading this book. In fact he may well remark as he goes along "Of course, of course." This would be a natural reaction and in no sense would it be a criticism of the author's obvious suggestions and conclusions, since they are all based on common sense, and it is painfully evident these days that common sense is in short supply.

The author has a dual claim to a hearing. He is a minister of the Northshore Unitarian Church in Danvers, Massachusetts, and is also a registered architect with added experience as a consultant. In five sections, with numerous subdivisions, he ranges from the *tired dragons* of the past, when triumphalism held sway, through all the elements that make up the design problems of today's parish complex, with emphasis on New Directions

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which can implement these problems for the benefit of all concerned. And Mr. Lynn rightly stresses the need for humility and notes that "A humble church can be a learning church, and a learning church can grow again, to become not a threatening monster but a servant working for the common good." A far cry from the triumphalism of the 1930s.

Because of the need for community participation in a dynamic liturgy the church today should not seat more than five hundred and should be so planned that the space for worship is elastic enough to allow for use every day. This means quite a different seating arrangement—away from the *static* box pews and the use of movable benches and chairs. The organ is an element which, at times, must yield to the use of other musical instruments. Our author notes that "In the earliest days, the organ was one of many instruments." Another element that needs to be rescued from its too often lowly place below the stairs to the organ loft, is the baptistry. It can now be placed in a prominent place *in* the space for community worship, or perhaps in a separate chapel, so as to allow the congregation, as a whole, to take an active part in the ceremony.

One important aspect of the problem of the present-day church complex concerns taxation. Too often, in certain suburban locations, the church's social life is such that it becomes little more than a tax-exempt country club.

Questions of maintenance and landscaping are deftly handled by the author. He calls attention to an element of overall design that can enhance the effectiveness of an imaginative concept—the open space or garden that separates the entrance to the church from the bustle of the street. An excellent example of this is the First Lutheran Church in Boston, designed by Pietro Belluschi.

In the search for solutions to problems of design, use of space, maintenance—all matters of practical importance—we do not find in this book any hint concerning elements of art: sculpture, painting, mosaics, etc., although the author does mention the use of banners hung in the Hope Presbyterian Church, Creve Coeur, Missouri, in which they shape the worshipping space, but even here, Mr. Lynn remarks that these banners " . . . *add* a focus of inspirational design and color to the religious setting." Otherwise the space ". . . *would appear empty and uninspiring.*" (Italics ours). There you have it. Art is to *add* whereas it should really be an integral part of the total design. You would not *add* a nose to a person's face; it is part of *his* total design!

In the budget established by members of a planning committee a reasonable amount should, at once, be allowed and then deducted from the anticipated total and set aside in a separate savings account. The artist, architect or designer should decide what is art in the total design concept. After all, art is not merely the *added* whipped-cream on a strawberry shortcake.

As most churches noted by Mr. Lynn are Protestant, with the exception of a well-planned Catholic church in Vettelschoss, Germany, it may not be amiss to make a bow to a center of liturgical imaginative dynamism in Santa Fe, New Mexico, the Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Here, as in many other places which could derive much benefit from Mr. Lynn's counsel, hard work and humility on the part of pastor and people could accomplish wonders. The best laid plans can be spoiled by apathy and continued indifference and invincible ignorance.

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CORRECTION

A sentence was omitted in Colin Westerbeck's screen column in the December 15 issue. The fourth line starting *"The 400 Blows,"* should have continued: "Truffaut's next film (though it was released here before *Bed and Board*) was *The Wild Child*, a film which remade *The 400 Blows* from a new point of view. . . ." We regret the error. THE EDITORS

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